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## FRENCH CONTEST FOR VERDUN DRIES BACK THE ENEMY

Germans, With Enormous Losses, Fail to Hold Their Ground Around Verdun

Footing in Old Outer Fort is Held by Them Only At Terrific Cost.

Paris, Feb. 27.—The German attack on Verdun, which commenced on January 15, has been driven back to the line, which now lies directly under the guns of the forts. Narrowing their most desperate attacks on the short front between the Douaumont heights and the plateau north of the village of Vaux, to the east, the Germans have continued their efforts in a strong attack, but failed to gain ground.

The position of Fort Douaumont, the French official communication does not call it a fort, but a "position" was taken by the Germans Saturday and is still occupied by small enemy forces. The French are determined to hold this position on three sides, and announce that the German force is maintaining itself in the position only with difficulty.

The very unfavorable weather conditions with a heavy fall of snow may be one reason for the lessening of the force of the German attack. Despatches from the front indicate that heavy losses also may have had an effect. The slopes east of the village of Douaumont, which has been the centre of the heaviest fighting, are covered with snow.

Five separate attacks have been made by the French on Fort Douaumont in an effort to retake the position, the German War Office says. Each attack was made by fresh troops, but all five were repulsed with heavy French losses. The number of unaccounted French prisoners in the seven days of the battle, the Berlin statement says, has reached 15,000. Finding a position untenable because of the fire of both sides, the French have evacuated the Cote de Talon, to the west of Douaumont, and the position is now unoccupied, the French say, by either side.

In the official statement received today from Berlin, the German War Office announces that the French are pressing forward to the west of Douaumont, have reached Neuf, on the southern border of the Verdun districts northeast of Brice, taking Champeville and the Cote de Talon on the way. The taking of Champeville already has been announced by the Germans, but the announcement was contradicted by them as based on an erroneous report. To the east of Douaumont the German offensive, the statement continues, is still in progress, and the French are still fighting on the heights of the Cote de Talon.

Paris is extraordinarily calm in the presence of the battle now in progress around Verdun. There are no indications of surprise or nervousness, but only other confidence in the result.

Since the battle began, the French have been losing the line, the French maximum effort has not yet been made. The French losses in killed, wounded and prisoners since the Verdun battle began, the French official communication claims, are not yet known.

SNOW STOPS DRYED RED. Since 5 o'clock Friday morning, the French have been attacking the German line, but the snow has been falling in rain again against the Cote de Talon on the high plateau. The French have been attacking the German line, but the snow has been falling in rain again against the Cote de Talon on the high plateau.

It is estimated that the German line at Verdun fighting are now well over 100,000.

The military critic of the Paris north of Verdun is most encouraging. "We have examined on our left wing," he says, "a height extending from the point east of Champeville to Douaumont, on which it would have been dangerous to stay too long, since the German force was concentrated in a loop within which Champeville was the key. The French have been falling back to heights between the village of the Yvaux, and the Germans are now attempting to assault the position."

It did not claim to have retaken Douaumont, but said: "A furious struggle has been in progress around Fort Douaumont which is an advance element of the old defensive organization of Verdun fortress. The position captured this morning by the enemy, after several Turkish assaults which cost him extremely heavy losses, reached again and gone beyond by our troops, which all the attempts of the enemy have not been able to push back."

SLOPES COVERED WITH DEAD. The Sunday night report contained the following: "To the east and to the west of the position of Douaumont, of which the Germans have severely injured German troops are pressing closely from three sides, the small enemy forces which were able to gain a foothold there and which are maintaining themselves there with difficulty. Both the French and the Germans, the Cote de Talon, rendered untenable, both sides are now attacking the position, the hardness of the artillery of both sides, is not occupied by any of the sides."

It is further announced officially that in the region to the north of Verdun, the French have been attacking the German line, but the snow has been falling in rain again against the Cote de Talon on the high plateau.

ATTACKING FROM THE EAST. In the afternoon communication the French War Office contradicts the German claim of the taking of the Douaumont heights. The communication says that a strong German attack in the region of the Douaumont heights, which is east of the Cote de Talon, and another, which is west of Douaumont, broke down under artillery and machine gun fire and counter-attacks.

The German War Office says that the French have been attacking the German line, but the snow has been falling in rain again against the Cote de Talon on the high plateau.

BATTLE FOR FORT CONTINUES. The past week has been one of strained anxiety, and the volume of news that has been received from the front has been practically thrown back out of a strong position received the strain. It is reported that the French have been attacking the German line, but the snow has been falling in rain again against the Cote de Talon on the high plateau.

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offering most gallant resistance, was in retreat eastward. The constant of the combined forces was a serious struggle. The German army, striking the British in flank and rear, made the result a foregone conclusion. The French and later the British forces attempted to get in touch with the British on the south, but the direction of the British attack was necessarily fatal, and unless it had been forestalled, no effective help was possible. The railway through which Constantine was restored, and the first step in the German long-planned was accomplished.

### OPPORTUNITY STROKE AT VERDUN.

The successful first step was soon counteracted by events of first-class importance. On Feb. 18 the Russian invasion of the Caucasus captured Erzerum and has since delivered lightning blows on the flying Turks. Their only stronghold in Armenia, with command of the roads west and south, have been lost, and the moral effect throughout the Middle and Near East is already far and wide. No more opportune stroke has been forthcoming since the Battle of the Marne, and the success of the Russian army contains nothing more than the first of a series of blows in the west.

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